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BEAUTIFUL GARDENS IN AMERICA



READERS of THE LOTUS will recall its beautiful series of articles on old English estates and gardens and the remarkable depth of vista secured in many of the old gardens of England. Surely, however, there could be nowhere a grander perspective presented to the view than at Blairsden, the estate of Mr. C. Ledyard Blair, near Peapack, N. J. Nothing could be finer than the view from the terrace or from any point on the long flight of terraced steps that lead down in the direction of the valley.

In the lavish array of pictures many of them in colors, in that stately volume, "Beautiful Gardens in America" by Louise Shelton and published by Charles Scribner's Sons, one may enjoy the noble perspective of Blairsden. Miss Shelton writes of the estate that the hill covered with wild shrubs sloping to the lake, the formal garden, the water garden and rose garden, with the long inclined pathway seeming to lead out to space immeasurable into the green Garden of Everyman, combine with the scenery to make it a place of remarkable beauty. The formal gar-

den with vine-covered brick is like the villa, Italian in design.

Miss Shelton writes that it would take much time and long travel to discover the State possessing the greatest number of fine gardens, but there is little risk of misstatement in placing New Jersey as fourth or fifth on the list; New York, including Long Island, in the lead, then Massachusetts, and possibly Pennsylvania or California next.

Rhode Island contains some of the most magnificent places in the country, the majority of them situated near bay or sea, where they thrive in congenial environment. The older gardens are found in the vicinity of Providence, while at Narragansett and Newport those of a later period abound. Newport by the sea, more famous than any other American summer resort, naturally possesses the greatest number of gardens on an elaborate scale. The coast at this point is somewhat sheltered, the air is mild, and there is sea moisture so beneficial to flowers.

Lovely and lovingly planned is the garden of Mariemont belonging to Mrs. Thomas J. Emory. It is a poetical spot, overflowing with color and sunshine, yet with shadowy retreats, and the stillness that belongs to an enclosure

of grass paths. It might be taken for a bit of foreign garden from any part of the world, and possesses a quality of beauty of which one could never tire. The long, broad path with its brilliant border and distant vista is the central division of a charming plan.

Few estates in America are as imposing and as suggestive of the grandeur of an Italian or English country-seat as the Edward J. Berwind place, The Elms, and it is probably among the oldest of Newport's famous places. Probably no place at Newport is more noted for its beauty than Vernon Court, belonging to Mrs. Richard Gambrill. Vernon Court is not a new garden; it is unspoiled by garish accessories, and to the lover of the garden majestic it represents a perfect type.

Probably unique in this country is the Greek Theatre, accomplished wholly as a garden, at Piranhurst, Santa Barbara, Cal., the estate of Mrs. Henry Bothin. The flower garden at Piranhurst, named for Saint Piran, an Irish saint, is exceedingly picturesque. The wonderful Greek Theatre, with its wings of tall, clipped Cypress, was modelled after one at the Villa Gori, in Italy. This remarkable planting, together with the roses and other flora in the adjoining garden, combine to make it one of the most famous places on the coast. The owner of Piranhurst is also possessor of the garden at Ross, with its hill background covered with massively grouped hydrangeas and rose vines. Through the courtesy of Messrs. Charles Scribners' Sons, THE LOTUS presents a view of Blairsden, Vernon Court, and two views of the Greek Theatre at Piranhurst.

To any one of these gardens and,

indeed, to any of those described in Miss Shelton's book, could be applied the lines entitled "A Garden," by an author whose name is not known:—

A GARDEN

Come not with careless feet
 To tread my garden's unfrequented ways.
 No highroad this, no busy clanging street,
 No place of petty shows and fond displays.
 Here there are blossoms sweet
 That shrink and pine from inconsiderate gaze;
 And here the birds repeat
 Only to loving ears their truest lays.
 Hither I can retreat
 And drink of peace where peace unravished stays.
 Herein are streams of sorrow no man knows—
 Herein a well of joy inviolate flows;
 Come not with careless feet
 To soil my garden's sanctuary ways.

As for the beneficent spirit that broods over gardens, Miss Shelton exclaims that if only we could live in the world more as we live in the garden, what joy and contentment would be brought into daily life! In the garden hurry and noise are needless, for perfect system can prevail where each plant, each labor has its especial time, and where haste is a stranger, quiet reigns. It is in the stillness of the green world that we hear the sounds that make for peace and growth. In the garden, too, we labor faithfully, as best we know how, in following rules that promise good results. Then at a certain time we must stand aside, consciously trusting to the source of life to do the rest. With hopeful eyes we watch and wait, while the mysterious unseen spirit brings life into plant and tree.

Dating back their beginning some two hundred years in certain Southern States, numerous gardens, beautiful with age, tell the story of the ardent garden lovers of earlier days, who had to send abroad for their green treasures

which they planted and carefully tended, hopefully planning for the future. Many such gardens with their choice shrubs and trees still stand as green memorials to those long-ago people who had time and money for this luxury. Since then the hardships following war have brought sad neglect to the beautiful places—the number we can never guess—many of which, however, are now being aroused to fresh life by new owners who appreciate the charm and dignity of an ancient home. Hidden away in some of the old plantations of the South, and scattered over the Eastern States, near Philadelphia, along the Hudson River, and in parts of Massachusetts, the best of the older gardens are found.

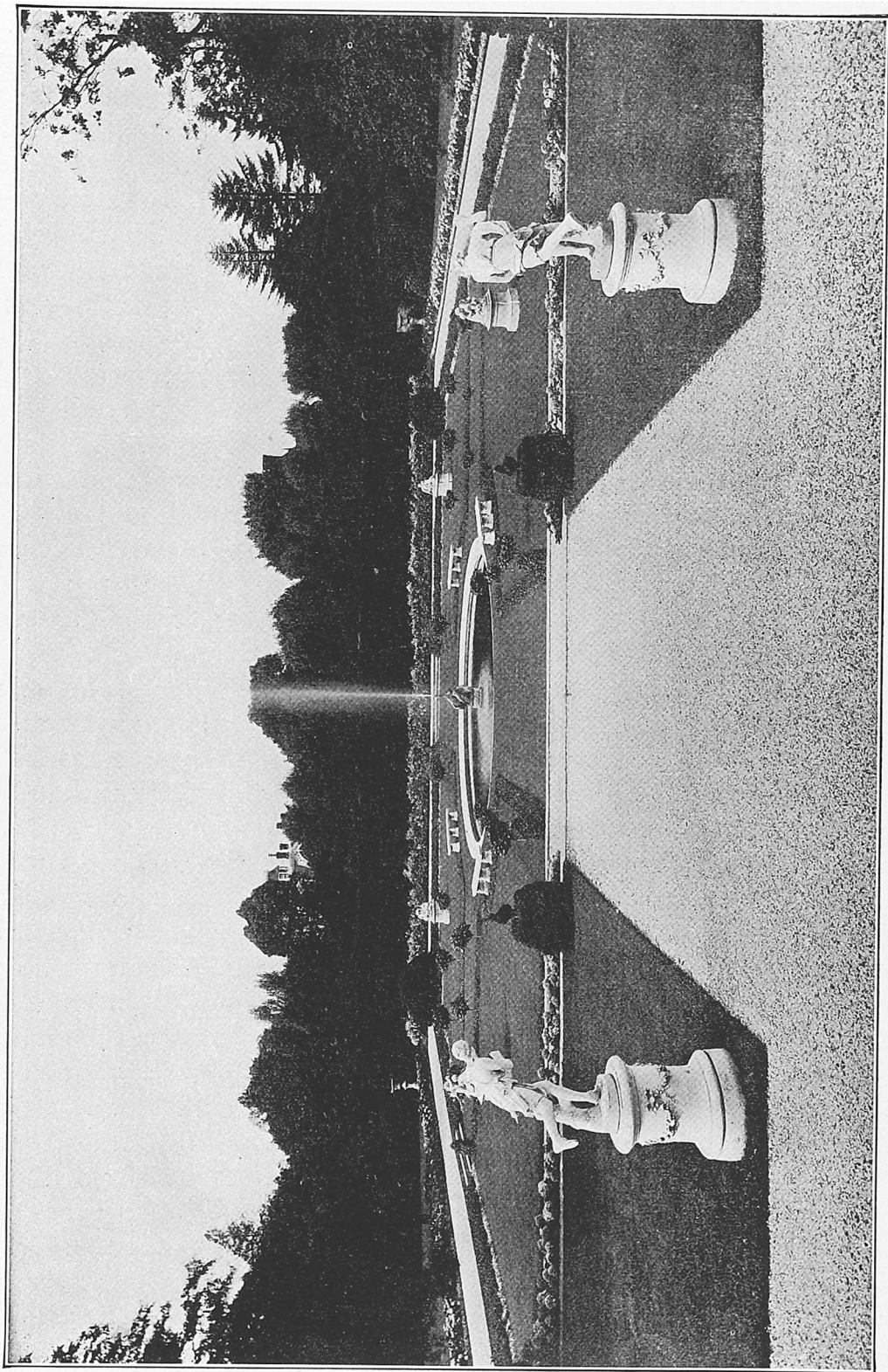
More and more we are getting away from the cold, stiff planting of canna, coleus, and salvia. Few of us can tolerate the impression of newness and rigidity in the garden, and as Father Time cannot help us fast enough we try to emulate him by stamping his mark of mellowness in innumerable ways upon the youthful garden. Then Mother Earth is consulted as to her unrivalled way for the grouping of her flower family, and she shows us the close company they keep—hand in hand over the whole meadow—nothing stands quivering alone, grasses and plants blending to fill all spaces. Then above, in the rainbow, we learn the harmony for our color scheme, and unto no nation on earth need we apply for the latest theories dealing with these subjects for the beautifying of our gardens. The more of the nature scheme we bring into them the greater satisfaction will they give.

We should build the garden with a

setting of fine trees grouped upon the outskirts, otherwise it will seem as incomplete as a portrait without a frame. Half of the charm attached to the beautiful old gardens of Europe lies in the richness of their backgrounds of stately hedges and trees. Wise words—all of these—from the author.

The author of "Beautiful Gardens in America" says in regard to effect of climate on our gardens that not only are there the matters of latitude and altitude to be considered, but often quite as important is the influence of the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic or of the Japan Current in the Pacific Ocean. Again, there is the moist climate by the sea, or the quality of soil, the periodic torrential rainfall of one section, and elsewhere the long months of drought.

Nowhere she finds do flowers grow more luxuriantly, in greater variety, or through a season more prolonged than on the coast of Oregon, Washington, and California,—soil, moisture, and temperature combining to make gardening a simpler task than it is elsewhere. The shore country of Southern California is a perpetual garden, with a climate almost unrivalled for plants and for humans. North of San Francisco the near approach of the Japan Current produces a climate quite similar to that of England, and with the exception of possibly two months (and even then an occasional rose may bloom) flowers are found all the year round. This favored section of the Northwest nevertheless is not visited with as much sunshine as is found elsewhere, but its gardens blossom with little assistance save from the frequent rainfall, more welcome to



"Vernon Court," Newport, R. I.

plants than to men.

In Kansas and the other flat and fertile States of the Middle West the garden period, on account of the long, dry summers, is usually limited to the weeks from late March to late June. In the more Northern temperature of the lake region gardens which flourish all summer are numerous.

The Atlantic States have a shorter blooming season than those on the Pacific coast. Throughout the South, east of New Mexico, the warm weather season is as prolonged as on the Pacific coast, and yet in the Southern States garden bloom is checked half-way through the summer by excessive heat and drought (except in the favored mountainous localities), which at least interrupt the continuous succession of flowers. For this reason gardening in the South except in spring, or in high altitudes, is generally discouraged.

Although not stated as an indisputable fact, scientifically the author inclines to believe that the seacoast section of the Maryland peninsula is the locality in the East especially favorable to the most prolonged season of bloom. Lying between sea and bay, this particular district in the latitude for early spring and late frost enjoys also the benefit of surrounding waters, escaping thereby the parching summer climate from which gardens of the interior suffer, to the west and south and to the north, almost as far as Philadelphia.

While the summer climate in the Southern States has not generally a salutary effect upon the flowers, yet it has favored the best development of Boxwood, Holly, and certain other choice shrubs and trees, which do not

thrive well north of Philadelphia. Fine specimens of Boxwood are rare sights in New England, where the more severe winters have from time to time destroyed the top growth. Many old New England gardens show the characteristic Box-edged path, but the shrub is usually not over two feet high, and is likely to remain so unless eventually the winter climate should moderate. Boxwood is seen on the Pacific coast, north of San Francisco, but not to the south, where Cypress is popular. There is little Boxwood in the latitude of New York City, except for edgings, where for tall hedges Privet, Arbor-Vitae, Hemlock, and Spruce are probably the most reliable evergreens. Arbor-Vitae is unlikely to live longer than seventy years.

Taking up the different sections of the country—through all of which it is, of course, impossible for *THE LOTUS* to follow Miss Shelton—she says, in speaking of Bar Harbor, that not only is it possible to grow all the favorite flowers along the shore, but even on the islands lying off the coast of Maine there are innumerable little gardens, such as those at Isleborough, which revel in the moist sea climate of mid-summer and blossom most satisfactorily until frost. At this point it is interesting to contrast the climate of the North Atlantic section with the region directly across the continent along the Pacific coast, where at Vancouver's Island, for instance, plant life enjoys a climate similar to that of England, with a growing season quite as prolonged. She found beautiful gardens at Bar Harbor, on the estates along the shore as well as farther inland. Most of them, screened by fine growths of trees and

shrubbery from view of the highway, are equally well protected from sea-winds, blooming luxuriantly in spite of the fact that not very long ago the best authorities believed that gardens on this shore could never prosper. The author mentions Kenarden Lodge (Mrs. John S. Kennedy) and Blair Syrie (the late D. C. Blair); and in Southern Maine (at South Berwick), Mrs. George S. Tyson's Hamilton House which is pronounced to have no rival in that section of New England. The hand of an artist has wrought a perfect scheme delightfully in accord with an ideal environment. Within the grassy court of the main garden the several small open beds are filled with groups of annuals. The rear beds contain tall-growing perennials mixed with some annuals. There are weeks when the garden is all pink, and again all blue and white. It is surrounded on three sides with most artistic pergolas, from one side of which the view down the Piscataqua River is a picturesque feature. Stone steps on another side lead to an upper garden filled with bloom surrounding a quaint and ancient little building kept as a studio. In isolation, simplicity, and ripeness the atmosphere of the whole place breathes of olden days, and might well be taken as a model for a perfect American garden. Could there be higher praise?

Of the many wonderful gardens in Massachusetts possibly the most remarkable of all is Weld, in Brookline, which is known to gardeners far and wide. There is nothing in America more extensive and more richly planted. The numerous beds are filled with bloom for many weeks, and each bed contains a massing of one variety,

whether perennials or annuals, which, when it has finished flowering, is replaced by something of another period. The French features in the garden are prominent and the planting may be considered American in some respects —altogether a most pleasant combination. This garden belongs to Mrs. Larz Anderson.

The scheme of the garden of the famous sculptor at Chesterwood, in Glendale, is not as dependent on flowers as on the well-considered adjustment of garden equipment to the natural beauty of the environment. Sunshine mingling with the shadows of the spreading trees plays its part by giving life and color in changeful tones to the old stone seat and fountain. The vine-covered arch frames a view of the flower-bordered path which fades away into a woodland, and these with other sights gladsome to lovers of such art have given Chesterwood its place in the ranks of beautiful gardens.

Recently completed at Great Barrington, the spacious garden at Brookside is the best piece of Italian work in this section. It belongs to Mrs. H. Hall Walker.

Among its formal gardens, Tuxedo, N. Y. at present has nothing more imposing than the one at Woodland. The wall-beds contain perennials in mass against the vine-clad background, and the central fountain is framed in broad beds of roses, in bush and standard form. This garden's stately effects are enhanced by the richly developed forms of clipped evergreens in Boxwood and various Retinosporas, to all of which age, as must ever be the case, lends force and dignity.

The Cragswerthe garden, a spacious



"Blairden," Peapack, N. J.

plan on three connecting terraces, charmingly exemplifies the results obtainable by the exercise of good taste upon desirable opportunities. Each terrace illustrates, in harmony with the whole, a special beauty of its own. Woodland belonged to Henry L. Tilford and Cragwerthe to Mrs. Samuel Spencer. Mrs. Andrew C. Zabriskie's Blithewood, Barrytown-on-Hudson, is a charming example of a more modern garden, beautifully located and planted especially for May, June, and September. A vine-covered brick wall surrounds it on three sides, and a terracotta balustrade is the boundary on the river side. Chinese Junipers, not supposedly very hardy, are, however, the well-grown, clipped evergreens in sight. Barrytown is about a hundred miles from New York.

Up on the Beacon Mountain the Wodenethe gardens were begun about seventy-five years ago, remaining ever since in the same family, and always celebrated for their beauty, due doubtless to the devoted and skilful care continuously given them. Trees, shrubs, and vines are rich in maturity; the impress of Father Time has so kindly marked the place, that of the older gardens Wodenethe belonging to Mrs. Winthrop Sargent, is probably the finest on the Hudson.

At Ridgeland Farm, in Westchester County, the owner, Mrs. Nelson Williams, has shown that the smallest garden possible when fitted to artistic surroundings and filled with harmonious bloom can, as a garden and as a picture, satisfy our craving for the beautiful quite as completely as a subject on a much larger scale. This fair little plot, with its brick paths and gay blos-

soms, continues in bloom for several months, which, in spite of narrow beds, is always possible in a well-planned and carefully tended garden.

In Miss Shelton's book the illustrations representing Maryland are gathered from the vicinity of Baltimore, the particular garden region of the State. Hampton is the oldest of them all, being an entailed estate and one of two old manor-houses in Maryland still extant. A severe cold snap a few winters past did great damage to the Box, which in consequence had to be cut back, but time, it is hoped, may restore its original form and beauty. This charming Box-edged parterre, with its fine surroundings and associations, is possibly the best-known in the South.

The old Indian name for the Cylburn plantation was Cool Waters; it covers two hundred acres, about five miles beyond Baltimore. Cylburn House is of stone with broad verandas, and stands majestically on a high plateau, surrounded by gardens, shrubbery, and an extensive lawn, which is fringed by a beautiful primeval forest that stretches away on three sides to the valley below. The garden is one of the old-fashioned rambling kind, made lovely with a combination of tall shrubs and flowers and occasional trees. Hampton belongs to Mrs. John Ridgely, and Cylburn to Mrs. Bruce Cotten.

At The Blind, Havre de Grace, on the Chesapeake, is a charming and typically Southern garden with ancient Box hedges for a background, and filled with the bloom of many old-fashioned hardy plants and shrubs. The property of two hundred acres is partly under cultivation and partly

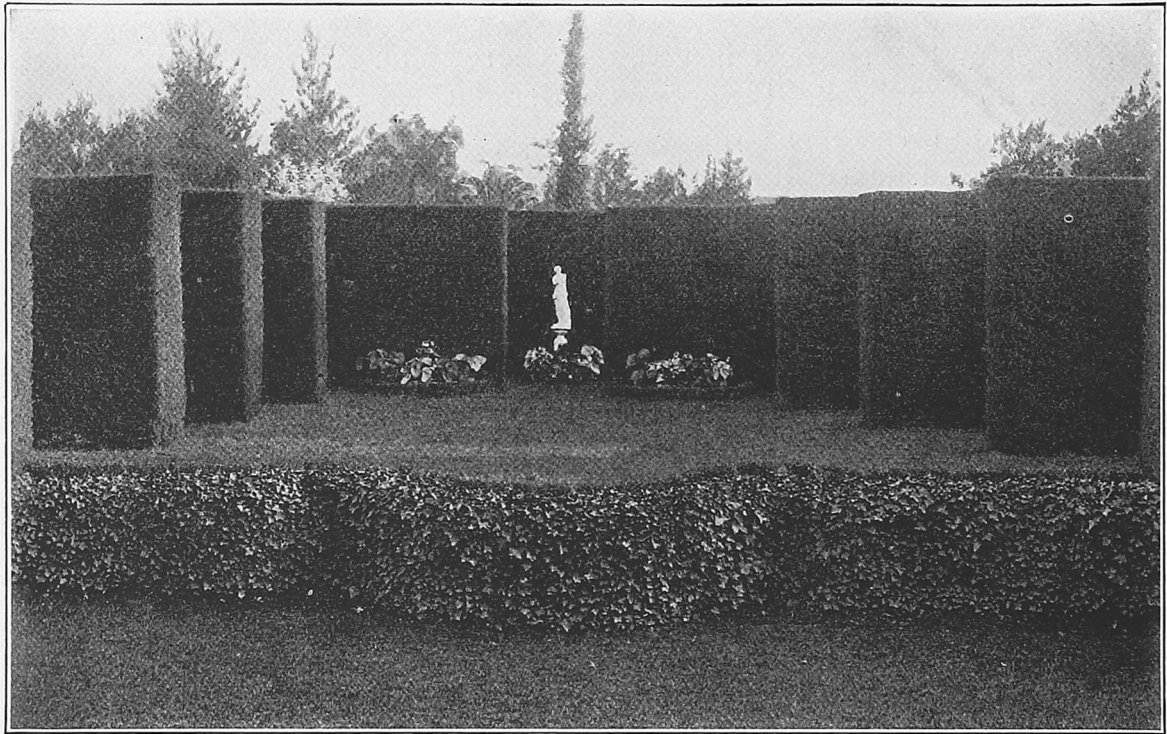
covered with Holly and ancient trees. Around the gray stone mansion in springtime the place is like a fairy-land, with hundreds of blossoming shrubs and fruit trees. Originally the land belonged to the Stumpp family, who acquired it by grant from one of the early English governors. It is now in the possession of Mr. J. Lawrence Breese, who keeps it as a shooting-preserve and stock-farm.

In South Carolina, Magnolia-on-the-Ashley, considered by some as one of the world's most beautiful sights, especially in springtime, is the most famous place in the State. It is owned by Colonel Drayton Hastie, who inherited it from his grandfather, the Reverend Mr. Drayton, an Episcopalian minister, in whose family it had remained since the latter part of the seventeenth century. In the days of the Reverend Mr. Drayton it was discovered that the garden had been laid out over land containing extremely valuable phosphate deposits, but neither he nor his descendants would have the place disturbed for the sake of an increased fortune, and the garden continues as it was, the delight in early spring of visitors from all over the world. Miss Shelton quotes one who resides near by: "The garden first came into notice about a hundred years ago. In spite of all the cultivation, it still suggests the heart of the forest, with the old oak and gray moss and wild flowers mingling with Cherokee Roses, Jessamine, etc. These Magnolia gardens are not only wonderfully beautiful, but, I believe, quite unique. The great show is not magnolias, or even the camelias, although they are lovely—but the Azaleas, which grow in such profusion and

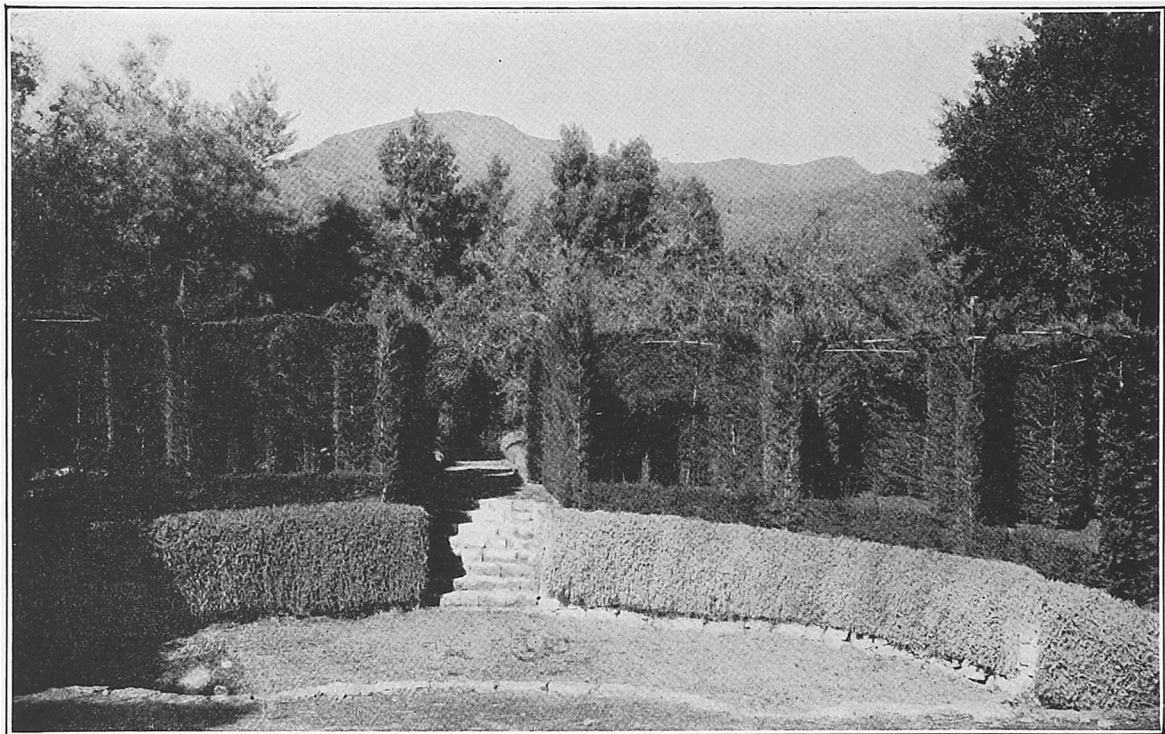
variety of shades that one loses all sense of individual plant and flowers and perceives only glowing, gleaming masses of color veiled by festoons of gray moss, giving one a delicious feeling of unreality, almost enchantment. In Owen Wister's 'Lady Baltimore' there is a beautiful description of Magnolia. The coloring on the post-cards is not in the least exaggerated." Live Oaks over two centuries old draped with gray moss suspended from the branches! This wonderful growth is not an uncommon sight in the Southern States.

Wonders will never cease, and perhaps the most remarkable chapter in "Beautiful Gardens in America" relates to Alaska. The "Alaskan Churchman" is cited by Miss Shelton: "In coming into Alaska, you first awake to the beautiful reality in Skagway. This is the point where the White Pass road is taken to make connection with the river boats for the interior. Your eyes rest upon the wonderful fulfillment of the flowers and your crag-weary soul is refreshed. With the dark winters and short summers, every ray of sunshine has to be used, and when in the summer the sun shines all day and nearly all night for three months, there is no time for loafing in flower land.

"Just take a walk down through Fairbanks in July and you will begin to think that wonders will never cease. You will see flowers, that at home you had to coax and nurse into growth, here in radiant, luxuriant masses. The pansies are unusually large, whole borders of them, and paths bordered with beds a foot wide, filled to the edges with changeable velvet. Sweet peas grow up to the tops of the fences, and



The Greek Theatre—The Stage



The Greek Theatre—The Boxes
 "Piranhurst," Santa Barbara, Cal.

then, if no further support is given them, over they go, back to the ground again. All summer the nasturtiums climb nearer and nearer the roofs of the cabins, and bloom and bloom in sheer delight. Some paths are bordered with poppies, big stately red and white, and white and pink ones, or the golden California beauties. These natives of warmer climes seem perfectly at home in the Northland. As-ters scorn hothouses and grow in profusion wherever they are planted, and wherever they are they are beautiful. They are as large as the chrysanthemums the Easterner delights in, and of all the various changes of colors! By them, perhaps, will be dahlias as large and rich as any you have ever seen. The more beauty-loving and flower-loving the owner of the garden, the longer you will stay to look and wonder. Candytuft, sweet alysum, and mignonette will greet you from their accustomed places on the borders of beds of flowers, and you will almost smile at them as at some old-time friend. Then you will see

where some daring gardener has bordered the beds with phlox or snapdragon, and you will feel compelled to admire the result.

“Never have I seen such begonias. The flowers are like camelias, and the colors exquisite. Shades of pale yellow to deep yellow, pale pink to deep pink, and pure white. The geraniums, too, grow to giant size, and seem to be ever-blooming. One really is tempted to feel the stalks of some of them before it can be believed that they are not two plants tied together. There was a geranium in one of the small towns which filled the window of a store.

“Many cabins have five or more baskets hanging from the eaves. Imagine gray log cabins with birch baskets filled with blue lobelias; flame-colored nasturtiums climbing to the roof, beds of velvet pansies, borders of crimson poppies leading to the gate, where golden California poppies make way for you to pass, and beyond, the distant Alaskan mountains, snow-covered and glistening in the sun.”